

Lt. Governor John Garamendi Asks President Bush For More Federal Dollars to Fight the Extraordinary Fire Season and Future Flooding in Burn Areas

GOLETA - Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi, who is a California State Lands Commissioner and former Deputy Secretary to the U.S Department of the Interior, issued the following statement on President Bush's aerial tour of California's fire areas scheduled for this afternoon.

"From the vantage point of the air, Mr. President, we need your help here on the ground," Lieutenant John Garamendi said. "We need your help in the potential for ongoing fires this season. We need more federal assistance. Much has been forthcoming but we anticipate even greater needs in the days ahead. So Mr. President, please make these resources available to us."

"Secondly when the fires are out and the rains come here next winter we are going to have flooding problems. What we need here in this mountainous area of U.S Forest Service land is for the U.S. Department of Forestry to step in to reseed and replant. We must prepare for the potential for flooding now."

Garamendi made the statements Wednesday in Goleta at Santa Barbara County Fire Station 11 while briefing county and city leaders, fire fighters and reporters on how the state budget stand-off must end and include money to fight the extraordinary fire season ahead.

He asked President Bush to make resources available and asked the U.S. Department of Agriculture to step in and provide money to deal with the flooding problems that will likely follow the fires.

Garamendi said there have been more than 2,000 fires in California since June.

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For Immediate Release

July 17, 2008

Contact: Beth Willon

916-445-8994

